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St Monica's Catholic Primary School Lone Working Policy

1. Introduction

St Monica's Catholic Primary School recognises that there may be an increased risk to the health and safety of its employees whilst working alone. This policy sets out our approach in both identifying these risks and managing them adequately. Any questions regarding its operation should be addressed to the Headteacher.

Lone working is not covered by any specific legislation, but the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 apply. This legislation states that "It shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all of his/her employees" and "It shall be the duty of every employee while at work to take reasonable care for the health and safety of himself/herself and of other persons who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions at work; and as regards any duty or requirement imposed on his/her employer or any other person by or under any of the relevant statutory provisions, to co-operate with him/her so far as is necessary to enable that duty or requirement to be performed or complied with".

Employers and employees therefore have a duty to themselves and others with regard to safety and there is an increased risk to the health and safety of employees when they work remotely from other colleagues or other persons and/or outside 'normal' working hours. Lone working differs from situations where people work unaccompanied, with a means of communication available, however in certain situations where individuals work unaccompanied, it may be necessary to adopt a similar approach to lone working in order to control the risks to the unaccompanied worker. Examples of factors that may need to be taken into account are given below.

2. Definition

For the purposes of this policy, a lone worker is an individual who spends some or all of their working hours working alone without direct supervision. This may occur (1) during normal working hours at an isolated location within the normal workplace, (2) when working outside normal business hours. Normal business hours deemed to be from between **08:00** and **18:00**, Monday to Friday during term time. Adjusted hours are in operation during the school holidays, times agreed with the Headteacher.

At School, people at risk may include anyone who comes into school alone during closure times and particularly the premises staff and site manager. It also includes finance officers when taking cash to be banked.

3. Procedures

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring suitable procedures are in place for undertaking risk assessments for all situations requiring lone or unaccompanied working, within their area of responsibility and that any remedial action identified is implemented. Such procedures must also ensure that all necessary personnel are fully aware of any precautions or specific methods of work to be followed, including action to be taken in the event of an emergency.

Lone working must only be carried out following authorisation of the Headteacher responsible. Where appropriate, an 'approved list' of lone working activities will be drawn up within the School, outlining situations where lone working may be authorised and the necessary precautions or work methods to be followed.

Provided such requirements can be met, lone working may be deemed to have been authorised and it is the responsibility of the individuals concerned to ensure all necessary precautions or work methods are adhered to at all times.

Any person who becomes aware of circumstances involving lone working, where existing control measures may not be fully effective, must inform the Headteacher, or the Health and Safety Governor via the Clerk to the Governors, as soon as possible.

Our risk assessments will cover all work currently undertaken alone (or proposed to be), where the risk may be increased by the work activity itself, or by the lack of on-hand support should something go wrong. Once all job roles involving lone working have been identified, the following factors will be considered:

- **Risk of violence** - All jobs involving an element of lone working will be assessed for a risk of verbal threats, or violence. The priority will be those involving face-to-face dealings with members of the public and/or cash handling.
- **Plant and equipment** - Plant and equipment used by lone workers will be assessed to ensure that it is suitable for use by one person.
- **Work at height** - Working at height will not be undertaken when working alone.
- **Chemicals** - Any existing, or planned use of chemicals will be considered with regards to their suitability for use by those working alone.
- **Access and egress** - Some lone working may require access to locations that are difficult to access or exit. Assessments will consider whether these tasks are suitable to be carried out by one person.

4. Examples

Examples of factors that will be taken into account when authorising lone or unaccompanied working include:

- The nature of the tasks involved;
- The nature of any substances involved;
- The nature of any tools or equipment involved;
- Means available for raising an alarm in the event of an emergency;

- Any known medical conditions of persons involved;
- The level of knowledge, qualifications and experience of any persons involved;
- The vicinity involved;
- The time of day involved;
- The means available for periodically checking the well-being of any persons involved;
- Advise someone that they are in school if possible;
- Lock the doors at night.

This is not an exhaustive list and individuals will be expected to report all situations to the Headteacher or health and safety representative which leave them open to any health and safety issues so that the risk can be assessed and control measures applied where necessary. Through the risk assessment process (see attached) existing control measures will be assessed for their effectiveness.

5. Control Measures

In order to manage the risks identified, we have introduced the following control measures:

General:

- Not undertake work for which they are not trained/ qualified.
- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety.
- Not do anything to put themselves in danger.
- Know, and follow, relevant safe working procedures and guidelines including operating machinery and using hazardous substances.
- Never cut corners or rush work.
- Always follow reasonable targets.
- Stop for regular breaks and, if possible, change activity.
- Inform the Headteacher or Finance Officer of any relevant medical conditions.
- Inform the Headteacher or health and safety representative (site manager) of any hazards or accidents encountered. All accidents should be reported using the school's agreed procedures.

Risk of violence:

- Staff are required to lock themselves in the buildings when lone working.
- Staff must not arrange meetings with parents or members of the public when lone working. All meetings must be arranged during school occupancy times or when there is more than one informed member of staff on site for the duration of the meeting.
- Staff are required not to handle cash when lone working.
- Late meetings must finish promptly and not leave one member of staff alone on site.
- Staff must not approach, or let into the buildings, unauthorised persons when lone working.
- Alarm activations out of hours do not present a risk as these are covered by a security contract.

Communication: Staff are advised to -

- Avoid lone working wherever possible by arranging to work in pairs or as a group.
- Carry either a mobile phone or school telephone at all times when lone working.
- Let someone know you are coming into work, how long you expect to be and when you are leaving.
- Comply with fire evacuation procedures and attend fire assembly points, ensuring that you are cleared to leave the site in the event of an incident.

First aid:

For those working on our premises, first aid kits can be found around the site hanging from walls in the School Office, classrooms and the KS2 corridor. Stock is also held in the stock cupboard.

Emergency procedures:

In the event that a lone worker falls ill, or into difficulties, they are to use their mobile phone/ school phone to contact the Headteacher (or Deputy Headteacher if the Headteacher is on holiday) the staff member's nominated person or the emergency services. The Headteacher will retain a copy of emergency contact details for all staff at home and in work.

Access and egress:

Staff are required to consider weather conditions before coming into and while at work.

6. Training

Lone workers will be trained in safe working practices.

7. Lone Worker Duties

All lone workers are expected to cooperate fully with instructions given by the Headteacher. They are also expected to follow the school's safe systems of work and any associated procedures. Failure to do so, may be a disciplinary offence.

8. Monitoring and evaluating the policy

This policy will be monitored by the Governors and reviewed by the staff as part of the school's monitoring cycle.

Health and Safety Governor: